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On Monday in a Bangladesh courtroom, a judge read the following charge to a defendant: "By praising the Jews and Christians, by attempting to travel to Israel and by predicting the so-called rise of Islamist militancy in the country and expressing such through writings inside the country and abroad, you have tried to damage the image and relations of Bangladesh with the outside world. For which, charges under section 295-A, 120-A, 124-A, 105-A and 108-A are brought against you. Are you guilty or not?"

Answered the defendant: "I am not guilty."

The defendant is journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury. As editor of the Weekly Blitz, Mr. Choudhury wrote articles friendly to Israel and critical of Islamic militants, and sought to travel to Israel in 2003 for a writers' conference. He never made it. Instead, he was detained at the airport in Dhaka, imprisoned in solitary confinement and without trial for 17 months and denied medical treatment for glaucoma.

Mr. Choudhury was finally released in early 2005, largely thanks to pressure from Illinois Representative Mark Kirk. But the campaign against him, official and otherwise, never abated. The offices of his newspaper were bombed and later overrun by a mob. The government continued to press the charges. If convicted, Mr. Choudhury could be hanged.

The good news is that Congress is paying attention: Yesterday, Mr. Kirk and New York Democrat Nita Lowey introduced a resolution demanding the charges be dropped. That should get the attention of a government that receives \$64 million a year in American aid. The government of Bangladesh might also consider that the harm it claims Mr. Choudhury's journalism has done to its national "image" has, in fact, been wholly self-inflicted.